

New Mexico Diversified Agricultural Management Common Ground Principles

- Agricultural classification is an essential public policy to enable the production of local food and fiber, support local economies, provide food security and incentivize keeping agricultural lands intact.
- Agricultural production, ecological health and natural resources are vital to our communities.
- Provisions need to be made for extended drought conditions that impact landowners' ability to continue agricultural production
- Landowners who cannot maintain economically viable agricultural operations or meet minimum state agricultural classification requirements due to threatened and endangered species regulations should not lose agricultural classification as long as they are managing in accordance with species conservation requirements.
- Active restoration of degraded agricultural land under recognized local, state or federal programs should qualify as agricultural so long as it is being restored to agricultural use within a specified period of time.
- Land fragmentation poses a significant threat to agriculture, ecological function and wildlife.
- Rural sprawl can have negative fiscal impacts on local governments as studies show the cost of providing services often exceeds property tax revenues generated.
- Any proposed change to property tax structures needs to be revenue neutral—no net decrease in tax revenues that support schools and government services
- Property taxes should be equitable and loopholes should be reduced or eliminated
- Landowners who are actively managing their land in collaboration or partnership with local, state and federal agencies for sensitive species or other high priority public benefits, such as municipal watershed protection, should not face property tax increases as a result of that cooperation.
- Changing economic and climate conditions, environmental regulations and land ownership patterns are challenging traditional agricultural production. Agricultural producers need to be able to take advantage of diversified income opportunities such as ecosystem services payments and agro-tourism.
- For many communities, wildlife and other natural resource values are major economic drivers and provide important public benefits.
- If *qualified* agricultural production is taking place on a parcel (all requirements in terms of profit, carrying capacity, etc. are being met), the entire parcel should be classified as agricultural. Otherwise, portions of land set aside for riparian protection, wildlife habitat or other natural resource values may be taxed at a higher rate, serving as a disincentive to appropriate and publicly beneficial management.